

News Release



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

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*DEQ is a leader in
restoring, maintaining
and enhancing the
quality of Oregon's air,
land and water.*

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DEQ to Hold Oct. 21 Information Meeting about Downtown Portland Willamette River Sediment Investigation

What: The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality will present information and answer questions about an investigation of sediment pollution in the downtown reach of the Willamette River. DEQ staff will talk about what is known about sediments in the river and about future investigations.

Who: Keith Johnson, Cleanup Program Manager, DEQ Northwest Region

When: 6 to 8 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 21

Where: John Ross Plaza Studio, 3623 SW River Parkway, Portland

For more information: Visit DEQ's website for more details at <http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/cu/nwr/willametteriver.htm>, or contact Keith Johnson, Cleanup Program Manager, DEQ Northwest Region, at (503) 229-6431 or Johnson.Keith@deq.state.or.us

Background: In 2008 DEQ, the city of Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services and other partners completed an investigation of sediment quality within the Willamette River through downtown Portland.

As part of a comprehensive evaluation in this area, 81 surface and 36 subsurface sediment samples were collected in Willamette River between river miles 12 and 16. Samples were analyzed for a broad range of pollutants expected to be present in sediment as a result of past industrial activities and stormwater runoff. Sampling locations were selected to assess the potential impact to river sediments from stormwater discharges and releases from past and current riverfront industries, and to get a sense of general ambient contamination levels throughout this reach.

(More/over)

Based on DEQ's review of the final report, in most cases, average levels of the contaminants of concern in this downtown reach are at least 10 times lower than concentrations in the Portland Harbor. However, the investigation found at least trace levels of contaminants in all samples collected at shoreline locations in the downtown reach.

However, some areas of concern exist. DEQ identified nine priority locations for additional review. DEQ prioritized these locations where the initial data suggests a potential source of contamination may require cleanup. DEQ identified these locations for additional sampling or analysis of archived samples from the initial investigative effort. The objectives of this work are to confirm initial detections and get a sense of the contamination's potential magnitude.

DEQ considered bioaccumulation and toxicity impacts in this evaluation. Bioaccumulative contaminants persist in the environment, accumulate in living organisms and tend to increase up the food chain, with greatest concentrations in fish and wildlife.

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